Author's response to reviews

Title: Alternative Health Care Consultations in Ontario, Canada: A Socio-Demographic and Geographic Analysis

Authors:

    Allison M Williams (awill@mcmaster.ca)
    Peter Kitchen (kitchen@mcmaster.ca)
    Jeanette Eby (ebyj@mcmaster.ca)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor:

Thank you for the opportunity to revise and resubmit our manuscript. The comments from the two reviewers were very helpful. We have taken their suggestions into consideration and have made several major and minor revisions to the paper. Here is a summary of the changes we have made in the order that they appear in the paper. We also include the origin of each change with respect to suggestions and comments made by Review 1 {Lui} and Reviewer 2 {Steinsbekk}.

The major changes are highlighted in yellow in the manuscript.

- We have revised the abstract by making more explicit the main analyses that were performed and by stating the conclusions more directly (e.g. geography is not a factor but strong association with certain socio-demographic variables. {Steinsbekk})
- We have reduced the length of the article by removing certain tables and figures (see below) and cutting back on details in the text that can be found in the tables and figures. {Steinsbekk}
- The literature review has been expanded to include several studies conducted in Europe and Australia. (e.g. Fox et al 2010, Xue et al 2007, Steinsbekk et al 2007; Wardle et al 2010). {Lui}
- A suggested, the definitions of massage, acupuncture and homeopathy/naturopathy have been deleted and we have included references to their respective national associations where definitions are available {Lui}
- We have reduced the number of acronyms in the text and now only use two (CCHS and MIZ), which are clearly defined. {Lui}
- We have modified the Methods section to make the description of analyses clearer as related to the presentation of the results. {Steinsbekk}
- The Methods section now contains a brief description of the post-hoc analysis presented in Figure 3 (women and health). {Steinsbekk}
- We have added asterisks in Table 2 to clarify the denominators (% total population 18+ and % alt. care consultations). {Steinsbekk}
- Since geography was not a factor in determining alternative health care consultations, certain tables have been removed. The “old” Table 3 showing consultations by Public Health Unit has been removed and we now include just the Map of Ontario (Figure 1). {Steinsbekk}
- In addition, we replaced the “old” Figures 2-5 showing alt. care modalities by MIZ with two new tables (Tables 3 and 4) which describe these trends more succinctly. {Steinsbekk}
- The legend in Figure 1 (map of Ontario) has been corrected and now reads “Consultation Rates”. {Lui}
- We present the results of the regression models more effectively by showing ‘Total Consultations’ in one table (Table 6) and by grouping the three alt. care modalities in another table (Table 7). {Steinsbekk}

- The above point addresses the concern about presenting the results in a clearer fashion as related to the changing sample population. A) comparing alt. care users to non users and B) comparing each alt. care modality to the other alt. care modalities. {Steinsbekk}

- We have strengthened the Discussion by minimizing the repetition of results from earlier sections and by providing a fuller interpretation of the findings (e.g. homeopathy/naturopathy in rural areas, the proliferation of massage therapy in urban areas and women and health) and have linked this discussion to the wider literature. {Lui}

- We have dealt with each of the minor revisions (numbers 1 to 4) specified by Lui.

Thank you for the opportunity to revise the paper. Please let us know if you have any more concerns or questions about the paper.

Sincerely, on behalf of the authors,

Peter Kitchen, PhD
School of Geography and Earth Sciences
McMaster University
1280 Main Street W.
Hamilton, ON L8S 2K1
kitchen@mcmaster.ca